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9-30-2020

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Recommended Citation

Rowan, Steven, "American Railroads History of their Construction, Original Costs and Profit Mode of administration adopted Review of the legislation ruling them Sequel to Interior Improvements, etc. By Guillaume Tell Poussin Former Major of American Engineers and aide de camp of General of Engineers Bernard Time is money Paris Carilian-Goeury, Bookstore of the Royal Corps of Bridges, Roads and Mines Quai des Augustines, No. 41 1836" (2020). *History Faculty Works*. 13.
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American Railroads
History of their Construction, Original Costs and Profit
Mode of administration adopted
Review of the legislation ruling them
Sequel to *Interior Improvements, etc.*

By Guillaume Tell Poussin
Former Major of American Engineers
and aide de camp of General of Engineers Bernard

Time is money

Paris
Carilian-Goeury, Bookstore
of the Royal Corps of Bridges, Roads and Mines
Quai des Augustines, No. 41
1836

Selections from French translated by Steven Rowan
University of Missouri-St. Louis

Source: Hathitrust Digital Library *Chemin de fer américains; histoire de leur construction, prix de revient et produit; mode d'administration adopté; résumé de la législation qui les régit. Par Gme-Tell Poussin.*

Abstract: This statement by Major Guillaume Tell Poussin of construction of American railroads is divided into an Atlantic Line from Boston to Roanoke, and secondly by lines from the Atlantic to the West. A third part portrays the administration of construction, stressing the costs involved, handled in detail by state agencies. The texts of legislation to create state agencies are reviewed and explained.

PREFACE

The object of this publication is to present a reasoned analysis of all the railroads executed or under construction in the United States. In a previously-published work we have given the history of the major works of interior improvement executed by the American federal government under the direction of a special commission appointed to direct this vast system. We were not able to treat railroads with adequate importance without violating the very title of this first work. We believe that we shall provide all information needed to comprehend the various applications done on American territory in this new publication on the powerful aid to the prosperity and civilization of modern peoples.^[1]

Since the introduction of this mode of transport [steam-driven locomotives] in 1826, North America has become literally covered by a network of new routes between the furthest points of the republic, permitting to all the [xvii] products of industry to find advantageous markets and to expand to all surrounding points.

It is to describe the whole of all these routes of iron, the various modes of transportation that are being applied, the works of art made necessary, and the mode of administration that rules these enterprises, that we dedicate the following pages, persuaded that it will not be without interest for men of the art thus to follow the details, the circumstances, that have determined the adoption of this or that path, of this mode of construction.

There is no intention here to offer one example to follow in all its places that we have undertaken this work, for, in our opinion, nothing can be strictly imitated, so many local circumstances of a land and the national character of the inhabitants, will demand different means; but we believe that it is a duty of those on the spot to reproduce and submit to his fellow citizens with the hope of being useful to his country.

We have divided this work into four parts: in the first we will describe all the railroads executed or in course of execution on the coast of the Atlantic; in the second part, all the railroads constructed to unite this first line with the interior or the West. These two parts will make known the double system of communication followed. Having described the most significant paths to the present day, the different modes of construction adopted according to the localities or destination; their price of purchase for each example cited, and finally their product.

The third part contains the details of the administrative economy [xviii] of American railroads, the calculation of costs of repair, maintenance of routes, the locomotive machines and the material transported, finally everything involved in the administration of these enterprises.

In the fourth part, we have united all the legislative documents on the material of the railroads, their control, the adjudication of works, in a word, everything that is associated with this industry in American legislation.

To make the whole more understandable, we have attached a physical map of the United States, on which are traced the chief navigable rivers, the canals and all the railroads built, in course of completion, or projected. At the end will be found some plates to give an idea of the various modes of construction cited in the course of this work.

^[1] *Travaux d'Améliorations Intérieures: Projétés ou Exécutés par le gouvernement Général ds États-Unis d'Amérique de 1824 à 1831* (Paris: Anselin/Carilian-Goery, 1834).